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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY China

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SUBJECT Economic Information: Highways between Manchouli and Harbin.

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1. The military highways between Manchouli (117-27, 49-36) and Harbin, used by the Soviet Army, are for the most part paved, but some sections have been surfaced only with logs and stones.
2. The roads in northwestern Manchuria follow the river valleys except in the plains, where they generally extend from village to village over the shortest route. In the lowlands the roads are often partially submerged during the rainy season. When roads lead from one valley to another, they pass through a saddle in the mountain chain. There are many slopes difficult even for pack animals to climb. Although surface conditions are better in the mountains than in the plains, the mountain roads are often strewn with rocks and boulders. The wider rivers are crossed in flat-bottomed ferries pushed by poles; on some large rivers the ferries are pulled by ropes permanently fastened to the banks. The small rivers and shallow streams which could be easily forded are spanned by bridges.
3. The roads are in disrepair for the following reasons:
 - a. Most of the soil is a clay and black earth mixture which becomes muddy during a rainfall.
 - b. The ground is usually wet and marshy in the forest areas.
 - c. Water cannot penetrate the granite bedrock which underlies the greater part of the area.
 - d. During the rainy season the heavy, two-wheeled horse-carts used by the Chinese make deep ruts which fill with water and then hamper, making driving or marching difficult.
 - e. The roads have never been repaired except for very small stretches.
4. During the dry season - autumn and winter - passage is easiest and the horse-carts tend to flatten the roadbeds.
5. Along the military roads which were constructed since 1945 there are wooden barracks every 25 to 35 kilometers. These barracks are equipped with drinking water facilities and can house 400 to 600 men.
6. West of Manchouli the military roads follow the nomad trails. Although at places these roads are difficult to follow, they are suitable for use by infantry and all types of vehicles. There are wells every 40 to 50 kilometers.

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